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DATE 13 February 1962

Copy No. *Tape # 2*
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DEBRIEFING OF FRANCIS GARY POWERS

Tape: #2
Date: 13 February 1962
Time: 16:26 Hours

25X1A9A Present:

25X1A9A

Frank, breaking off for a moment we had at the end of the previous tape we had you on the ground and ah people were helping you out of your parachute and out of your helmet. Lets break off at that point for a moment and, and raise this question. Did you then or did you subsequently gain any information as to the approximate location where you hit the ground?

Powers: The only thing that I could see for sure is I estimated ah, I'd say, 25 miles or more south almost directly south I think of Sverdlosk, maybe a little to the east. But on the south of that city. If I had a map that had more detail maybe I could pick it out because there was a collective farm. And there was ah several miles away from that

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place they ah took me to a ah larger village. But pretty primitive place, but ah much larger than the one I came down here and kept me there for awhile, and maybe I can find it on the map, ah it would show.

25X1A9A

[REDACTED]

Now how about the plane, does that lay on the same area or ah -----

Powers: Ah, never saw any part of the plane except ah one piece floating down as I came down by parachute. I don't know for it hit from my relative position.

25X1A9A

[REDACTED]

Could you say for certain that the plane disintegrated in the air - both wings came off?

Powers: I will say for certain this is what it seemed like to me. First the tail came off, because this particular airplane ah, requires an altitude ah, nose-up trim. And ah, if the - you should loose the tail it would nose over forward because the nose wants to drop. And that's what it did. The nose dropped, and I can only assume that the wings came off because the airplane couldn't possibly have spun as fast as it did with the wings on. But I don't know whether they came off immediately - I don't even know how long all this

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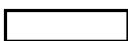
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took, but it seemed pretty fast. Nose went down and ah, I could feel something happening but I didn't know what was happening, but I know the tail was off at this time. Cause I could never have gotten in that position ah, with the tail in tact, and the control cables were not connected because - - - - -

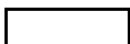
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Have you an estimate of how long it took you to get down from the time of the orange flash, from the time that you got to the ground?

Powers: I have no idea of time. I know that ah, I was going pretty fast ah, in that airplane because that altimeter was going around very fast. I seemed to be thinking ah fairly clearly here at this time, but I had for awhile there a fixed idea of - - - - on the ejection seat. Later on, I stopped to think and then started to try and climb out which I did but it - - it came down ah fast. That's all I can say. The time I - I - I couldn't - I have no idea.

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Then from the time of the orange flash ah your - your plane was out of control and as far as you were concerned ah - ah there was no forward progress of the plane there ah - ah

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that is operational flight?

Powers: Lets see. I heard or felt something - nothing loud nothing ah violent, but some sort of a sensation. I - - I can't say that - that I heard it and I can't say that it . . . I only felt . . . just seemed like everything just stopped. And looked up immediately and there was the orange flash. And while I was had looked up and saw this orange flash the right wing started ah - well it started to turn to the right. I turned the wheel to the left and the right wing came up. This well seconds maybe from what I set that amount of time and then the nose started going down, and I pulled back on the stick. And no, it was just loose. So no . . . no connection to the control services and ah nose going down faster. I mean it started sort of slow and then this went over. And when it got - and it almost ah, the nose ah pointing directly to the earth ah, something started happening to the airplane. I . . . I can't say that the wings came up then, but I don't see how they could stayed on there. And I assumed that that is where they came off, and if this involvement that was there, I don't know what they are, but it ended up as I said before ah, with the nose pointing toward

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the sky , not straight up, but at an angle of 45 degrees or so I would think. All I could see looking up of the canopy sitting there, was sky and going round - ah and it continued doing that until I got out of the airplane, and when I did get out, I was thrown right over the nose . The G-forces just pushed me - right on I went right directly over the nose of the airplane. And it just seemed like I was floating. I'd never been in a parachute before.

25X1A9A

Now lets go back into into the air and discuss the matter of altitudes of your flight. (ah, just one minute)

Interr: By any chance did you look at your watch?

Powers: Ah, lets see. I had the times that I turned on this ah. Well see we - you know how our maps are put up I think with ah, turning points and I had recorded that, and I did know that time - one time but I can't remember. I estimated one or two minutes after that. But I can't, I can't recall what it was.

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If we found a duplicate map, or could reconstruct a duplicate map, could we come pretty accurate on the time?

Powers: We could come within well now I don't know how

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accurate it would be but it - I'd say within a half an hour or less. I'm sure less than a half hour - much maybe even less than fifteen minutes. I can't remember how much I was ah, ahead of schedule or behind schedule or - or right on schedule at these places. But the navigation had gone along fairly good for I was pretty close to ah - what my - ah ah - maps and flight planning ah told me had to be at that time. So it, its not many many minutes either side of what following the the flight plan would effect it.

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[REDACTED]

Alright. Lets discuss altitudes ah, to the best of your recollections Frank.

Powers: Starting at the beginning of the flight?

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[REDACTED]

Well yeah, as to what your programmed altitudes were and ah, what your recollections were.

Powers: Now briefing on that was to climb according to ah, the regular schedule we had to carry in the climb which I did, and ah, climb to 70,000 feet - level - stay at 70,000 feet the entire flight. But the airplane will not with a full fuel load would not climb to ah, 70,000 feet immediately. It takes normal a half hour or so, or I don't know exactly how

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much time - I can't recall. But I was at 70,000 feet I think shortly after crossing the Russian border. I don't remember exactly where I got the ah, altitude, but I remained at 70 the entire flight until this happened.

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[REDACTED]

And you would say then that you were at 70,000 on this when this occurred?

Powers: When ah, thats what my altimeter ah, showed and the altimeter was set on a - a sea level ah, well ah..... I even forgot the term. But 29.92 ah ah was set in my altimeters at sea level pressure.

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[REDACTED]

Barometric pressure time?

Powers: Yes, ah huh. And it was indicating 70,000 feet. So any error that it might have had would be the only.

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[REDACTED]

Powers:

[REDACTED]

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Powers:

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Powers:

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[REDACTED]

Whats your best estimate of what actually happened ah?

Powers:

Well after I had seen those ah condensation trails that I mentioned earlier I kept ah through my drift sight scanning all around looking for those things. And those are the only two I saw. I saw nothing - I don't know what a rocket would look like that was ah being launched if one was launched at me. Ah but I saw no no smoke no nothing like that no trails being counted. But ah this happened shortly after making a

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turn, and the turn took ah a minute or two I don't know how long. And during that turn I wasn't scanning the sky. So maybe something could have happened during that time I don't know. And I wouldn't have seen it. But after ah rolling out on course and lining up on my flight line I didn't I didn't scan back behind me look around, I was busy getting lined up so that I would be right where they wanted me to be on on on this particular flight. They this is - this is. Well are you familiar with the way the maps are drawn up ah. The red lines meant that this was a stay as close as course as possible because this was important. Well this was a red line. And I wanted to stay on course. So I didn't look around, but spent my time lining up and then recording the time and so forth. But ah I reached this point and ah I had to record altitude, oxygen, ah ah temper --- ah EGT ah engine readings and stuff like that. And thats what I was doing when the explosion. Now I feel myself that the explosion was external of the aircraft. I don't know what ah - ah I've never been in a aircraft that has had an internal explosion. But I feel that ah ah it would definately be ah -

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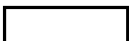
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the pilot would definately feel something violent I don't know. It took a metal he'd feel some sort of vibrations or something. And there was nothing like this. I seem to maybe got a little boost like a little push from behind. And there was another thing that I noticed when ah they took me to review the wreckage of the airplane, I paid particular attention to or I tried to the paint on the tail section. And I could see no signs of ah of ah ah where it had been hot or burned. And I was thinking that if the tail came off by itself and maybe made could . . . it could have made a flash in the sky, maybe burning or something, it would have ah shown ah signs of being very hot as it came out over the tail pipes and so forth. But there was none of this. I noticed also when I reviewed the wreckage that there were ah several holes in the wings. I don't know where they could have been from fragments or something or when it hit the ground.

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Holes all the way through the wings or ah?

Powers: Well I only saw I think one side of the wings. And through the aluminum. Ah through one edge anyway and I can't rem-

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ember whether they was all through or not. They had it in this building in this park in Moscow. But I am almost 100% convinced that it was an external explosion. That's - I don't know how it got there or anything else. But there was one other thing that ah might be important. After these people had gotten well lets see, you wanted to talk about the altitude ah

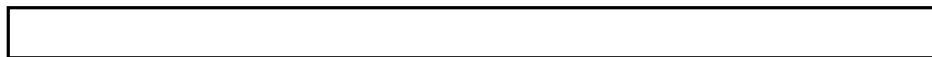
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Well go ahead and talk about it.

Powers:

After these people had ah helped me get out of this ah parachute and helmet and took my ah gun, knife and so forth, ah this one arm seemed to more or less take charge, all of them in civilian clothes - most of them fairly young. Some of them I'd say the group man who took me to this ah center were all ah between twenty-five and say forty - forty-five years of age. But one of them took charge, or seemed to and he asked me about science if there were two of us. And I said no there is only one. And he pointed up and I looked up and I think there was another parachute coming down. But it was high. I don't know how long it took me to get through this ah ah - to get out of that ah



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chute and get the helmet off - it didn't take very long just a few minutes. But this was a way up there ah and I'd almost swear that it was a parachute. Now I have no idea what it could be because there was no other parachute - couldn't be from my airplane. My thoughts were then later that ah maybe it was ah a rocket that they had launched. Now this was just my thinking trying to explain that. And they were had a chute that opened to to let the burn-out stage, or whatever it is down. But ah thats just something that entered my mind I have no idea what it was. But I'm almost positive it was a parachute. They loaded me in a car and took me away and I never did see what what it was.

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[] But you can say with certainty that there was - that you didn't come down in stages, you didn't come down say 10,000 feet or fell off or

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Powers: No, I came straight down, straight down. This is something that ah was mentioned to me before and ah I don't understand ah ah I think [] mentioned it ah on the way over. And I cannot understand this thing he said about ah the airplane descending this way and this way and this way because it

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wasn't my airplane that did it. At 70,000 feet the airplane fell apart and came straight down as far as I know. I don't know what kind of a shine it cut through the sky as it was falling, but it seemed to me straight down.

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Now just - just so we will have the record complete on this sound, how can you say for certain that you were at 70,000 feet? What is your recollection of your actual knowledge of that?

Powers: Well that was my assigned altitude and I was staying on that and after rolling out - see I had to record these things ah on these flight lines so that they will know the altitude. And I was doing this when the explosion occurred and I was on altitude on the flight line when everything was finished.

25X1A9A

In other words, this the altimeter was said

Powers: The altimeter said it was that. And it it wasn't ah, I don't know how much of air but there's not much air in the altimeter there. So depending on the ah ah atmospheric pressure I was close to 70,000 feet. But my altimeter said 70,000.

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Now of course I have access to the same information I think that was making reference to. And ah there is ah

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some information to indicate ah that you may have been in the vicinity of 69 or 70, 000 and then for some reason unexplained went to ah close to 74, 000.

Powers: No I didn't climb.

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[REDACTED]

After which you came down to approximately 60, 000.

Powers: Nope.

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[REDACTED]

And then with a fast decent, about 3500 feet a minute, came down to 37, 000 and leveled off. There was absolutely none of that at all.

Powers: It, it came straight down. There was no leveling or nothing. It disintegrated at that altitude or very shortly under I don't know. Ah I don't know how far ah when the nose pointed down how far it went down before the wings came off. But it couldn't have gone far. And it came down.

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[REDACTED]

When you saw the plane in Gorki Park the tail section was seperated from the fuselage?

Powers: And it was in good condition. Ah the tail section was by itself - ah they had the engine I think by itself - and there were pieces scattered all around - the two wings were each by themselves - ah there wasn't much^{left}/of ah or that I couldn't

[REDACTED]

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see anything left of the front section of the airplane. The
ah cockpit and the equipment. They had part of the canopy
part of the ah front of the ah canopy and and the canopy
that I ah ejected off so that I could climb out to head that -
it was broken. But ah it was pretty much smashed up -
that section.

25X1A9A

[] Well now, Kelly Johnson is going to go into this with you
in much more technical detail than we are qualified to do
probably tomorrow afternoon or something like that. But,
but ah just for our information here can you relate this this
crack-up this this disintegration of the plane ah with a
possible flame out of the engine. Was there a flame out
immediately coincident to this or were you aware of that
or is the question at all pertinent?

Powers: I can't remember exactly. But I can remember seeing
sometime that the rpm were going down. But I don't know
when this was or or anything else. But I could see ah that
the engine was floating down. I don't know before it dis-
integrated - while it was disintegrating - or even while I
was following. I don't know.

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Interr: At the moment of the flash now, this orange flash, this thing was running in order and as far as your controls were concerned it was on schedule the whole flight routine and everything was routine and normal.

Powers: Everything, Everything was perfect right then

Interr: As programmed you were believing

Powers: The only thing was that I was flying manual and not on auto but that's the only thing. And it was flying smooth and easy very smooth.

25X1A9A

[] Could a malfunction of the auto-pilot have - cause - ah be ah approximate or immediate cause of an internal explosion?

Powers: As far as I know, no. Besides that the auto-pilot was cut off and had been cut off for several minutes. I don't know exactly how long , but 10 to 15, 20 minutes. Ah and I'd been flying the plane.

25X1A9A

[] Now as to the sighting of the destructor mechanism and your inability to do so, were you aware of what the destructor mechanism on the plane was?

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Powers: Well only what I was told.

[] What was your understanding?

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Powers: It had a ah delay of 70 seconds - this particular airplane. I'm almost positive it was 70 seconds because we usually had the delay written on it. There were two switches. An "R" and I think the other was labeled destruct. And it could be re-cycled by turning it off if ah, if ah you ah you didn't want to do it any particular time by just flipping the switches back down - giving it a little time it would re-cycle itself and you could start all over again. But ah, I didn't want to to - I started to do it immediately. That was the first thought that came into my mind - destruct it. I reached up for it - I even had my hand on the switch and I thought, well I better see if I can get out. So I didn't flip the switch. And then I tried to work with this ejection seat and get back into a position where I could eject myself. And I couldn't do that and it's as I said before from then on.

25X1A9A

[] Well now, let me get this clear. Am I, am I - were the two manual operations here, one was, one was an arm to arm the destructor mechanism and the other one was to

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flip the switch to start the 70 second cycle?

Powers: Yes. One of them you could flip and you could leave it flipped all the time. I think that was - that was the arm switch. And I don't know exactly how the mechanism worked - it was explained but I can't remember exactly how it worked. But you could arm it and everything was alright. But 70 seconds after getting the I think it was labeled destruct switch it was supposed to explode. They varied in different airplanes the times of the ah, ah, the times that laid between the flipping of the switch and the ah explosion.

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[REDACTED]

And what was the purpose of that destructor mechanism to destroy the equipment or the plane itself?

Powers: The equipment. Well I don't know how much of the plane it would destroy, but ah my understanding was the equipment it was to destroy. And in destroying that it would of course destroy some of the airplane too. And the ah explosive itself is located in the equipment bay. Back behind the pilot ah I don't know how far

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[REDACTED]

You had some briefing on that?

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Powers: Yes ah, we had gone over that ah in meetings before this. But it's been so long now that I can't remember just how this thing worked. But here is something that ah they told me during the investigation of this - ah there in Moscow and they were lying to me, and I knew were lying to me but ah they told me that ah this was hooked up so that when I pulled the ejection seat that it would destroy the airplane and me too. Well later on this is ah they let me read these findings that their so called experts ah in studying this found out and the experts didn't know anything about this. It was just a trick to make me turn against the CIA in this little bit. But I knew they were lying.

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[REDACTED]

Well now one other point on this on this ejector. Lets see, you stated that the G-forces had you pulled forward to a point where your legs wouldn't wouldn't clear and all that - I understand that, but tell me with regard to the the seat how much clearance did you have if you were in position ah. . .

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Powers: Very little.

[REDACTED]

Had you gone through dry runs on this event?

Powers: Well never, never going out but ah actually how much was

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but there's pretty small there. And the ejection seat was added to the airplane after the airplane was ah already designed and built. And ah I was convinced that I could make it alright but one or two of the pilots who were taller longer legs and so forth, ah didn't think they could get out without hitting their legs. I've heard them mention that that's all.

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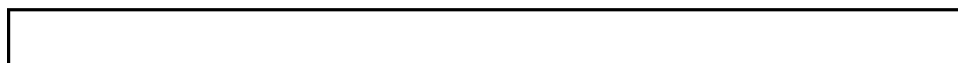
So if you were out of position in your seat why the the chances are that ah if you ejected anything that was not in position would be shaved off?

Powers: Well that that's my impression. It ah, well ah this is metal across the front top of the canopy. And ah if your legs are sticking or knees were sticking out a little too far they would hit that metal. And I don't know what they would do. But I had made up my mind to use that thing anyway if I couldn't climb out if I got closer I would - I couldn't climb out and pull it and take the chance of whatever happened. But I was too far forward to use it safely.

Interr: Gary, may I ask you a question or two?

Powers: Sure.

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Interr: Ah, I'll go back to this orange flame. When you first see this, is it above or in front of you or behind. Do you have anything in that way?

Powers: Oh ah, I didn't see an explosion. I just saw a light.

Interr: All around.

Powers: All around. Ah well see I was looking out the front. And well I could see out the sides also and everything just orange.

Interr: See that That's what point I'm trying to make. You have a wind screen don't you in the bubble - I mean you can see forward up the fuselage to the front end of the plane can't you?

Powers: Yes.

Interr: So you can look ahead?

Powers: Yes.

Interr: Now, at the point of this orange effect, it's ahead of you, above you and around you but completely.

Powers: That's what it seemed like to me. It just seemed like the whole sky was orange.

Interr: You didn't get the impression that something orange was behind you?

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Powers: No. I just saw everything was orange.

Interr: So it couldn't have been something explosive ahead of you
or some - this was an orange fire or something is there
much up at head as there was at the back it was like . . .

Powers: I couldn't - I couldn't see behind see.

Interr: Well I meant out the sides.

Powers: Out the sides. Well it seemed to me to be just about the
same in every direction. But I I know I looked straight
out the front. And I don't know how much I glanced ~~up~~ to
the sides. But I had the impression that it was all around.
Any where I looked it that it was orange.

Interr: And then it disappears.

Powers: No. Then I got to ah messing with the controls. And I
forgot about that. When ah the wings started to drop and
ah the nose started to drop. But it seems to me that it did
disappear. I don't remember ever seeing it again when
when this thing started coming.

Interr: And you don't remember seeing something like that ah in
the sky as you flipped and flopped and

Powers: No, there is nothing like that again. But the only time

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I remember seeing it is right after this ah explosion and I either heard or felt, which I ah don't know which. Ah I looked up I saw it and then started trying to ah control the airplane that was veering a little bit. And ah I don't remember seeing it again. But ah of course I looked back down. And I guess it must have disappeared or or I don't I don't know.

Interr: Was there anything in the construction of the aircraft ahead of your seat as the pilot that was explosive?

Powers: I think there was ah a destruction device in a ah recording outfit in the nose - I'm not sure. I can't remember exactly. But for ah recording ah the ah radar signals or something that could be picked up. I think there was one in there - small one just to destroy that particular cell that was also connected to this ah ah destruction device. I can't be sure.

Interr: Your general sensation was almost like a push. . .

Powers: Yes ah that

Interr: Not a shutter from the front upon you?

Powers: No, uh ah. Just it seemed like ah a little boost - Not much. I felt no ah ah turbulence no nothing just seemed like just a

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little exhilaration. And it might just have been my imagination I don't know but I can remember feeling something.

Interr: You you certainly didn't feel anything suddenly retarding you?

Powers: No, no

Interr: If there was a push it was that way?

Powers: Thay way right, from behind. And I don't know whether it's because of the position of this orange that I saw but I had the impression that it was behind and on my right. And I don't know where I got this impression. But when I was thinking about it that that's where it seemed to be.

Interr: When the wing flipped down and then you say you saw it peel off or give way or ah

Powers: Well the the right wing just dropped like it was making a turn to the right. Just a little bit. And I ah immediately corrected and it came back up.

Interr: Now that that wing didn't give the impression of being hit?

Powers: I felt no impact or anything.

Interr: That that's what I ah . . . and the wing it it dropped?

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It just it just seemed like the airplane was turning. Ah one wing went up and the other went down. I ah but it seemed like I was about to make a turn to the right.

Interr: Not like it was belted around and not going down that's what it is

Powers: No no uh ah.

Interr: Nothing gives you the impression that that wing had been hit by a blast and knocked down?

Powers: No it just seemed to be a normal ah ah type turn.

Interr: But then you corrected

Powers: Yes and it ah responded to the controls. And it didn't move too much it just went down a little bit and ah this is normal in flying you can't hold things level all the time.

Interr; But then almost immediately your nose

Powers: Either immediately after or while this was coming back up the nose started going down. But it was - I remember the wing going down and bringing it back up and the nose going down and trying to bring it up and it wouldn't come. And I don't remember that orange light any more after that first time I looked out and everything looked orange and then

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trying to to level out and so forth.

Interr: As as you moved down in your in that odd inverted position, the plane was not flaming or smoking or anything was it as far as you could recall it ?

Powers: I would say there was no fire connected with . . .

Interr: No fire connected with it. Another words it's like this that a dead bird in the air - it wasn't billowing smoke or

Powers: If it was I I knew nothing about it.

Interr: And and then then

Powers: I feel sure that the the engine stopped at this ah was stopping as this ah maneuver started taking place. Because I can remember somewhere along this that the the ah rpm gauge was going down. But I can't remember exactly when I noticed that. There was some - when the nose dropped there was some very violent maneuvers. I've never experienced anything quite like it. I I don't know exactly what happened there. And it didn't take long. But it ended up in that inverted position going around and I think it was going around clockwise. Wait a minute now - I was upside down. Ah well anyway when I opened the canopy it flew off to the left. So that probably meant that

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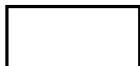
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I was going counter-clockwise ah ah looking at it from the top say.

Interr: Now you have a face mask on and that fogged up at once I take it.

Powers: No, ah well when the canopy came off uh ah. The cold air hit it and ah it was

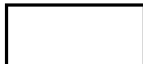
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Would you please go ahead and explain to this ah to us that at no time did you suffer any blackout or unconsciousness at all from the period just preceding the orange flash until you were on the ground? For record purposes.

Powers: No, there was no period to my knowledge that I was not that I was in any way ~~was~~ unconscious or anything. I can remember even now very vividly all that happened during this time. And ah - ah at that time it was very plain to me. The ah flash occurred - I made corrections on the airplane - the nose went down - it made some violent maneuvers - and started spinning and I knew it was going on all the time. - What was going on all the time.

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At any point on the trip , had you any feeling of nausea or any giddiness or light-headedness or did you go the whole way

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in good health?

Powers: I was feeling good. In fact ah I felt real good as soon as the weather cleared and I could see the ground. Because I knew I was getting ah some good stuff. And I ah felt good.

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[REDACTED]

In the decent when you were in the parachute coming towards the earth, you mentioned that the only thing that you saw coming down was what appeared to be a flat object which may possibly have been one of the wings at a considerable distance?

Powers: It ah was something flat falling like ah I don't know whether you would call it a leaf or maybe a flat piece of wood like a flat piece of wood that tumbles as it falls. And depending on the distance away from me would be the size if it was a long way away, which I couldn't tell, it would have been big enough to be a wing. If it was closer it could have been a smaller piece. So I don't know what that was.

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[REDACTED]

And nothing else was observed by you on your way down - no smoke, debris anything except this one little fragment which seemed to be spinning down.

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[REDACTED]

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Powers: The only thing that I can remember seeing is is that one piece. And it was just flipping.

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[] And there was no

Powers: No smoke no no fire no nothing.

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[] And did you see anything that would indicate to you an explosion, such as a plane plowing into the ground or anything?

Powers: No I didn't see that. But one of the ah witnesses that they called at the trial said that he heard an explosion when the ah ah stuff hit the ground ah I don't know which part he was talking about. He said it sounded like an explosion I don't know. And some of my ah little parts of my maps were scorched. So there had been a fire ah on the ground but there ah was no fire in the cockpit while I was ah in it.

Interr: And to the best of your knowledge there was never any over temp in the engine?

Powers: No definately not because I had retarded the throttle to maintain 70,000 feet so that I wouldn't climb higher and the engine was running below ah max viable temperature.

Interr: I think that ah I think answers my as far as

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Interr: That's as far as we can go for right now. Suppose we adjourn and ah consider after dinner if we want to take this up this evening. Ah well it depends on you. I would think maybe get a fresh start in the morning since we got a late start this afternoon.

Powers: Well it's up to you.

Interr: Well we'll make decisions after dinner and see how we feel.

Powers: Fine.

Interr: We are concluding Tape # 2 - Tuesday the 13th which started at 16:26 and is stopping at 17:18. Present at this time are Mr. Powers, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] had stepped out of the room a few minutes previously. This is all there is to this tape.

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